

Commission Notes



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Arts figure prominently in new State Museum

When the doors officially opened to the new Indiana State Museum at Whiteriver State Park, visitors will find culture, science and art playing a significant role in this new facility.

Upon entering, you are greeted by the work of an Indiana arts icon. Appropriately perched on a pedestal of Indiana limestone sits an aluminum sculpture created by none other than Indiana-born artist Robert Indiana. The towering creation stretches more than 50 feet above the ground floor of the new museum.

Resembling the famous "LOVE" sculpture Indiana created in the late '60s, (now found on the grounds of the Indianapolis Museum of Art), the yellow and blue letters pay tribute to the state where he was born and whose name he borrowed before embarking on his artistic career.

"This is a signature piece, and it's going to be a focal point for the whole museum," museum spokeswoman Jessica DiSanto told reporters at a sneak preview of the obelisk.

Beyond the towering monument providing dual honors to the state and its art, the Indiana State Museum boasts a collection of more than 8,000 works of art. According to DiSanto, many of these were rarely, if ever shown at the old museum.

Other than exhibiting small art shows every two years, DiSanto said most artwork was relegated to display on staircases. "Now we can properly showcase the talents of Indiana artists."

The museum features a 3,000 square foot permanent art gallery on the third floor of the steel, glass and limestone structure. The NiSource Inc. Gallery of Indiana Art



*Hoosier-born artist Robert Indiana, an inaugural winner of an Indiana Governor's Arts Award, created this impressive obelisk for the grand lobby of the new museum.
(Associated Press image)*

features a collection of works created by Indiana artists, both historic and contemporary.

"Many people don't know we have the largest collection of T.C. Steele's work anywhere in the world," DiSanto said.

Two other changing exhibit galleries are also featured on the third floor. The Wilbur E. and Florence Jeup Ford Gallery opens with an Amish quilt display through July 7 and the larger exhibition gallery features the exhibit, *Chinasaurus: Dinosaur Discoveries from China* through Sept. 29. Both changing galleries could also include works of art in the future.

Elsewhere, the museum's media displays pay tribute to Indiana's acclaimed performing artists. Photographs, film clips and audio files share the works of Hoosier performers and personalities such as Red Skelton, Frances Farmer, Florence Henderson, Karl Malden, Shelly

First quarter Arts Trust plate sales set records

According to first quarter reports from the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles, more than 600 Arts Trust license plates have been purchased or renewed during the first three months of this year.

A total of 595 plates were sold at BMV branches with another 35 purchased through BMV Express (electronic) sales for a total of 630 plates purchased from January through March.

Combined with plate sales in 2000 and 2001, the Arts Trust license plate sales have generated an estimated \$85,000 in contributions to the Indiana Arts Commission Cultural Trust Fund.

Branch Sales of Arts Trust Plate

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2000</u>
Jan.	141	80	0
Feb.	236	167	0
Mar.	218	145	47

"Out of 46 plates on the market last year, the Arts Trust plate ranked 13th overall in total sales, and ninth for organizations other than university alumni associations," Ilgen commented. "The increased visibility of the Arts Trust plate also helps increase awareness of public support for the arts in Indiana."

Long, Jim Davis, John Mellencamp, Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds, and David Letterman.

Even before visitors enter the museum, they will have opportunity to sample the works of stone sculptors. Renderings of historic or cultural icons from each of Indiana's 92 counties can be found carved into the museum's Indiana limestone facade.

Final curtain for two Hoosier performing arts venues

Spring of 2002 saw the end of an era in performing arts in Indiana as two of the state's longest running companies announced their grand finales.

Facing an increasing budget deficit in recent years, the board of directors for Whitewater Opera in Richmond decided to dissolve the organization at the end of March..

At the beginning of the current season, the opera was facing a projected budget deficit of \$25,000. While donor support, and revenue from ticket sales and a recent benefit gala were expected to address the budget shortfall, the board elected to take action.

"We felt it was important to go out with our heads held high - that we were able to meet our obligations, and this was the right time to

do it," Paul Hemker, WO board president told reporters.

Hemker said the board may explore other options including having the opera's sister company, Sorg Opera Company, Middletown, Ohio, stage productions in Richmond, or turn to other local performing arts groups such as the Civic Hall Performing Arts Center or the Richmond Symphony Orchestra to produce operas or assist with bringing in outside groups to perform.

Richmond is the smallest city in the country to have a full-time opera company, and Whitewater Opera was the oldest of the state's two full-time professional opera companies.

On May 25, the Edyvean Theatre in Indianapolis will end 35 years of productions with the final performance of "The Sound of Music."

Much like Whitewater Opera's managers, the Edyvean Theatre's board decided earlier this year that revenues were simply not keeping up with projected expenses. The announcement came one month after the death of the theatre's founder, Dr. Alfred R. Edyvean.

Under Edyvean's direction, the theatre became the first in Indianapolis to offer signing for the hearing impaired. Perhaps equally important, the theater also provided opportunities for fledgling actors, directors and stage technicians that helped develop professional careers.

The theatre had been struggling with building a new audience since relocating from Christian Theological Seminary on the campus of Butler University to the southside campus of the University of Indianapolis

Nation's governors recognize the arts as critical to future state economic and workforce development

According to a recent report from the National Governors Association (NGA), the arts can play a key role in building a highly skilled workforce, help revitalize communities, and help states remain competitive in a global economy.

Prepared in consultation with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), the report describes how a highly educated and creative workforce are vital to a healthy economy.

Through funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the NGA and NASAA are working to develop a series of issue briefs illustrating the value of the arts in achieving states' public policy goals.

The first such issue brief, The Role of the Arts in Economic Development, documents how the arts contribute to community revitalization.

The document points out that the nation's nonprofit arts industry represents annual revenue exceeding \$36 billion and is a potent force in economic development.

The second issue brief provides examples of arts-based education as a "money-and-timesaving" option for states committed to building skills, increasing academic success, heighten standardized test scores and lowering incidences of crime.

The report states that governors can position their states to use the arts more effectively by promoting partnerships among state agencies, communities, and the business sector.

Recognition from state governors that the arts are a potent force in the economic life of both cities and rural areas, providing direct and indirect contributions to state and local economies, is an important tool for advancing cultural public awareness.

For more information, visit:

www.nga.org

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